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THE BOOK OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Presented to the
Mangrove College Library
in grateful acknowledgment
of their invitation to
participate in their
Theatre Day - 1957

Patrick J. Blaney

By the Same Author

The Tidings Brought to Mary

The East I Know

The Hostage

The City

Tête-d'Or

Three Poems of the War



The Book of Christopher Columbus

A LYRICAL DRAMA

IN TWO PARTS

By Paul Claudel
Decorations by Jean Charlot

NEW HAVEN

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1930



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Book of Christopher Columbus

PART ONE

I PROCESSIONAL. Enter a Procession. First soldiers with halberds and muskets and two standard bearers with the banners of Aragon and Castile. Then a young man carrying on his breast The Book of Christopher Columbus wrapped in silk. Then The Reader of the Book marching all alone. Then the Chorus of men and women marching in files, first in good order and majesty, and then more and more like big children, riotous and boisterous, laughing, talking, chewing apples, carrying books, baskets of flowers, music stands, bottles of wine, baskets full of sheet music, playing and handling each other roughly. With much disorder and noise they take their places. Here they meet a few musicians already installed. The two long white hands of a woman can be seen divesting a harp of its black cover. A basso player is rubbing down his basso like a horse. The Book is solemnly put on the pulpit. The two standard bearers take their places on each side of the proscenium and the officer in command calls "Silence!" Then the Reader opens the Book. ♣ **READER**, read-

Trumpets.



ing. Here begins the Book of the Life and Travels of Christopher Columbus who discovered America. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. ❖ CHORUS, *thundering*. Amen!

II PRAYER. ❖ READER. Let us pray the Almighty God that He give me light and competency to read and to explain to you the Book of the Life and Travels of Christopher Columbus who discovered America and that which is beyond, for he is the man who united the Catholic earth and made of it one sphere under one Cross. I speak of the man foreordained by Providence, whose name means a dove and a Christ-bearer, as his history is written in Time and in Eternity. For it is not Christopher alone but every son of woman who is chosen to hear the call of the Other World and of that farther shore, which may it please the Divine Grace to have us attain. ❖ CHORUS. Amen!

On the screen
in the
back part of the stage
is seen revolving among confusion and darkness
a huge sphere
over which hovers a luminous dove.

III AND THE EARTH WAS VOID AND SHAPELESS. ❖ CHORUS. And the Earth was void and shapeless, and Darkness covered the face of the Deep and the Spirit of God hovered over the Waters. ❖ A VOICE, *alone, very shrill*. The spirit of God went down upon the Waters in the shape of a Dove. ❖ CHORUS, *lower and very somber*. And the Earth was void and shapeless. The Spirit of God. The Spirit of God. And the Earth was void and shapeless.

IV *THE INN IN VALLADOLID.* ❖ **READER.** Here is the poorest inn in Valladolid. And here is Christopher Columbus! He is old. He is poor. He is sick. He is about to die. The man who is with him and who is talking to him is the innkeeper. The old man is carefully holding the halter of his mule. It is his only possession and he is afraid it may be stolen. Here is the Mule of Christopher Columbus. What is Christopher Columbus doing? He is unpacking his meager possessions. What is inside of that poor trunk? Books, papers, the picture of a woman. At the very bottom there is something else. Chains! ❖ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS** takes from the trunk a mass of chains. He hangs them on the wall and, kneeling down, he begins to pray.

Enter Christopher Columbus.

Enter the Mule, which greets graciously the Public and then is taken to the other room.



V *CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS AND POSTERITY.* ❖ **READER.** Christopher! Christopher! Dost thou hear me? ❖ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.** I hear you. ❖ **READER.** Come with us! Come with us! Christopher! ❖ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.** Who are you that call me? ❖ **CHORUS.** Christopher! Christopher! Come with us! Come with us! Christopher! ❖ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.** Who are you and why do you call me? ❖ **CHORUS.** We are Posterity. We are the Judgment of men. Come with us and see what thou hast done unaware. See what thou hast discovered unaware. Leave this sordid place. Come to a higher region where a throne awaits thee! Here with us thou art cherished and understood! No wrong will be done thee any more. There is but one step to take and thou wilt be with us. Simply that narrow line to cross, that very narrow line which is called Death! ❖ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.** What do you say? Unaware? Oh, what I knew was infinitely greater than what I discovered. And that which is true in Eternity is infinitely truer than that which is true on the map. ❖ **CHORUS.** Cross the line, Christopher! Cross the line, Christopher! ❖ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.** I have crossed it! ❖ **ACCUSER,** rising from among the Chorus. Take care! I am here! I advise that man to consider carefully what he says

Christopher Columbus crosses the line and takes the place which has been made ready for him.

and what he does, for I am here to maintain the rights of free criticism. ❖ CHORUS, *shortly and in low tones*. Take thy seat with us, Christ-bearer! Leave thy litter of straw, leave thy chains, leave thy mule! Come with us and look! Look at thy own Life! Look at thy own story!



VI THE FOUR QUADRILLES. ❖ THE READER. Christopher Columbus has gone to Valladolid to make his humble petition to the King of Spain. What is the King of Spain doing now? What is happening at the Court of Spain, in the Palace of the King? Here is a Hall in the Palace of the King of Spain. And what you see there on the back screen is a map of America as it was known at that time, when gradually it emerged from the Waters, a cluster of islands, in the midst of which lay the Garden of the Queen, as it was called, and all about misty coast lines which took form little by little. ❖ CHORUS. Who are those four lovely ones? ❖ READER. These four figures preside over the Four Quadrilles that move about forever, right and left, forward and backward, on the chessboard of courts. Those are the four cruel Idols who forever defend, tooth and nail, their small store of privilege and knowledge. Dost thou recognize them, Christopher? They are called Envy, Ignorance, Pride, and the worst is Avarice. I mean Avarice not only of the purse but of the mind and heart. ❖ ACCUSER, *rising*. I ask leave to speak. I wish to undertake the defense of the King of Spain. ❖ DEFENDER, *rising in another place*. My quarrel is not with the King of Spain but with all sovereigns, with all governments, with all authorities when genius comes to shake and shuffle the chessboard of bureaucracy. ❖ ACCUSER. What King would have done as much for Columbus as Ferdinand and Isabella? Who else would have appointed as Admiral



Dance Music.

Enter Four Quadrilles presided over by four ladies in superb garments.

A solemn dance ensues. The music stops abruptly from time to time to let the dialogue be heard, but the dance proceeds.



and Vice-King an unknown nobody, an adventurer, a foreigner? Who gave him the boats, the men, and the money? ❖ DEFENDER. For that small act of faith the adventurer and fool has paid them with a World. ❖ ACCUSER. He did not know what he discovered. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. It is false! I knew much more than you know. ❖ ACCUSER. Then you have found your tongue, Sir! Yes, I am talking of you, Christopher, you mountebank, you Bible reader, you confounded ignoramus, slave dealer, liar, rebel, slanderer! Why did you come to make trouble in Spain and to upset all of her worthy traditions? What did Spain care about the other world? Why did you come to take Europe out of her small routine? Such men as you, if I had my way, should not be imprisoned—they should be shot! ❖ DEFENDER. All these faults of his, his illusions, suspicions, lies, his jealousy, his egotism, his cruelty, his contempt for things once found and his yearnings for the things yet to be found, all these traits are the faults of a loving heart. Who can rightly judge a loving heart? ❖ ACCUSER. What sort of love? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. The love of God's Earth—the desire for God's Earth! The desire for the possession of God's Earth! ❖ ANOTHER DEFENDER. Genius is like a mirror, one side is pure light and the other side is rust and dust. ❖ ACCUSER. Even your name is a lie. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. My name is the Christ-bearer, the Ambassador of God. My first name is Christ-bearer and my second name is all that is light, all that is light and spirit and wings!

VII THE DOVES.



The scene is filled by a whirlwind of white wings which drive away the wild grotesque figures of the Quadrilles. Somebody has captured one of the doves.



VIII THE COURT OF ISABELLA, THE CATHOLIC.

Isabella, as a child, in a beautiful garden of Aragon;
 in a wonderful garden of Majorca
 she holds her childish court.
 Soldiers, judges, high officials, physicians, and astronomers,
 all children.
 Isabella in the midst of the ladies-in-waiting
 holds her court and
 all offer to do her homage and to give her presents.

Enter the Moorish Sultan Miramolin
With his following of ministers and warriors, all children.

He solemnly brings to the Queen
a dove in a cage on a cushion.

(The dove can be seen in a cage on the screen.)

Isabella graciously accepts the dove;
she takes it in her hand;
she ties her ring to its leg and sets it free.

The bird flies away.
All this is clearly visible on the screen.





(On the screen.) **IX** *THE DOVE ABOVE THE SEA.*

X *THE CALL.* ❖ **READER.** As you know, Christopher Columbus always pretended that he was a man of high birth. ❖ **ACCUSER,** *laughing.* Ha, ha! ❖ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.** It is true! I always felt myself a King and the son of a King. ❖ **ACCUSER.** The truth is, he was the son of a weaver in Genoa. ❖ **READER.** Look at him still a child in the house of his father in old Genoa. His mother, his brother, his fellow apprentices may also be seen. His old mother is spinning thread. He does not work, he reads. What is he reading? An old book of travels, the *Book of the Travels of Messer Marco Polo.* ❖

On the screen are to be seen in agitation and disorder,
all mixed and blurred
like infusory life in a drop of water under the microscope,
all the components of the story of Marco Polo,
travelers, ships, camels,
Cipango, Cambaluc, the Palace of the Mogul Emperor,
Saint Thomas, and Prester John.
From time to time some things are more distinctly seen.
The Mother looks at her son.
She appears on the screen.
Then the sister comes timidly to read over Christopher's shoulder.
She also is seen on the screen.

THE MAN AT THE

WINDOW, *or rather the Chorus speaking and singing for him.* Christopher, come and look at your country. Do not pore forever over past and false things! Come and look at beautiful Genoa, round as a cup, round as the mouth of a perfect singer. Genoa! All filled with ships and handicrafts, all color and music, the flower and fruit of her trade with the Eastern shores. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. I am reading the story of Marco Polo. ❖ THE MAN AT THE WINDOW. A fig for this land sailor! The Genoese like the sea. We need the sea! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. And who knows if by the sea there is not a way to reach Marco Polo's land? ❖ THE MAN AT THE WINDOW. In the west there is no sea but the insuperable Will of God. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. It is the Will of God that calls me westward. ❖ CHORUS. *Singing, many-voiced.* Christopher, our child Christopher, do not leave your mother, do not leave your family and your country! I see Genoa unrobed and uncrowned by deed of one of her children! The Queen of the East! To another passes her regal scepter! The old Latin Sea has lost her oar, the Ocean has taken it from her, the old Latin Sea Mother has lost her oar and the beaker from which all nations came to drink. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. What am I to do? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2, *sustained by Chorus.* Christopher! Christopher! Christ-bearer! Go, go, go, away from them! God is calling you, my son! Away from them! Shut your ears to them! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Am I to leave my country? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. Christopher! Christopher! Leave your country! Leave your country! Leave, leave, leave your country! Like Abraham whom the Lord God called out of Ur in Chaldea. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Am I to leave my mother? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. Leave her, leave your mother! Leave your family! Leave, leave your mother! The Will of God is your country. Everything that hinders you from leaving is your deadly enemy. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Must I leave my country, my father, and my mother? ❖

(On the stage.)



CHRISTOPHER

COLUMBUS 2. *During his speech Chorus, in a low voice, repeats with fierce obstinacy: "Yes! Yes! Yes! The Will of God is your mother! The Will of God is your country!"* Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Go! Go! Go! Go! Go! The world to be made over again, the work of God, the Word of God, the Will of God to be done, that apple, the world, to be taken between thy fingers. There are thy mother and thy father! I, myself, am an old man, but I still feel in my veins the same fire, the same enthusiasm. All that hinders me, all that prevents me from leaving, all that is not my family, all that is not my country—these are enemies to be trampled under my feet! Westward, westward ho! ♣ THE MAN AT THE WINDOW. A dove! What is that dove? It looks as if it meant to enter here.

He jumps down from the window.

A dove is seen on the screen, and then the real bird
fluttering here and there on the scene.

A dove has entered the house and the sister of Christopher Columbus
takes it in her hand.

She gives it to her brother.

Lo! The dove has a ring tied to its foot.

He takes it and looks at it.

All this is seen at the same time on the scene and on the screen.



XI CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS AT LAND'S END. ❖ READER.

Christopher Columbus has gone away. ❖ CHORUS. He has gone away. Hurrah! He has gone! He has gone away! Farewell, Genoa! Farewell, family! He has gone away! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. I have gone. Goodbye. I shall not see you any more. Goodbye, mother! Goodbye, old Genoa, good old safe and shut-in Genoa! Mine, mine is the wide western horizon! Hail, Father Ocean! It is sweet to breathe, it is sweet to be with thee, it is sweet to feel you blowing on my face and your swelling bosom under my feet. As far as going goeth I will go. As far as going goeth not, I will still go. Here am I on this last little heap of stones toward the West! ❖ READER. Christopher Columbus has arrived at the Azores. ❖ CHORUS. Christopher Columbus has arrived at the Azores. Hurrah! Here is the end of the world! ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. Here! Here! a wreck! a wreck! ❖ READER. On the seashore Columbus finds a wreck. He finds tied to the wreck an old sailor half dead. ❖ CHORUS. A wreck—an old sailor half dead. ❖

*He throws a stone
toward the West.*



*Enter, carried by
Mereids and Sea
Gods, an old sailor,
half dead, tied and
roped to the figure-
head of a wrecked
ship.*

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. I remember! He was an old sailor half dead, exhausted to death! He was found on a wreck, half dead, half crazy, very far out in the ocean, westward of Terceira. ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. They were not islands. It was a school of blowing whales. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. Sailor! Old Sailor! Answer me! What did you see? What news from the other world? Is it true? Is it true?



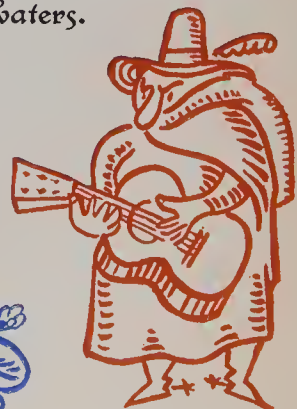
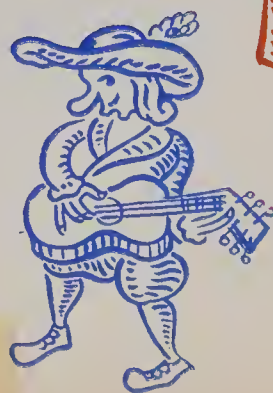
Is it true that there is land westward? ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. Be gentle—ask him nothing. He is dying. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. I care not if he dies, but he must answer! Son of the sea! What did you find? Hear me! Answer me! Is there another world? Is it true there is another world? Another land westward? ❖ CHORUS. Son of the sea! Hear me! Answer me! I care not if he dies, but he must answer! Son of the sea! Hear me! Answer me! Do you hear me? Is there another world? Another land westward? ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. What he took for islands are blowing whales. ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. They are not islands. It is the big sleeping fish Jasconius on which Saint Brandan built a cathedral. ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. Westward of the world live the Blessed Ones in islands of gold. ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. Westward of the world there is gold! Westward of the world and farther than Atlas, westward of the world and farther than Hercules, is a land of gold and wine! ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. In the midst of the Ocean Saint Brandan sings matins in a cathedral of glass. ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. Westward of the world is a golden land! Westward of the world is something purple and green! Westward of the world is a golden land! ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. What he took for islands are blowing sea monsters. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. There is a land westward! There is a land westward!

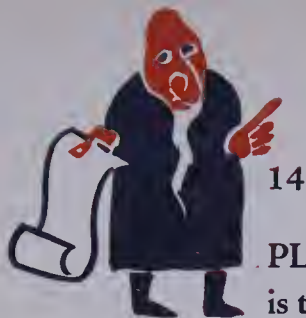
XII *PAY YOUR DEBTS, CHRISTOPHER.* ❖ READER. Christopher has come back to Lisbon. Everywhere he meets unbelief and jeers. He has engaged in business, poor business. He marries. He fails. He squanders his wife's dowry. Here he is at the Chamber of Commerce of Lisbon answering his creditors. Pay your debts, Christopher! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. A fine thing, the sea! A sweet thing to clasp and hold in my arms, that rounded earth! How I love that beautiful road westward! Give me that far-away gold in which to bury my hands. Oh, Lord, how long? How long am I to wait and wait, instead of answering to the call of the sun? I, the wanderer, miserably picking my food here and there like a sea gull, when shall I fly straight away on the royal road of the sea? Who will give me the Indian Main that it may engulf me? When shall I step from this world to the other world on the purple carpet which the setting sun unfolds beneath my feet? ❖ FIRST GUITAR PLAYER UNDER THE WINDOW, *sustained by Chorus*. Hrrrr! Christopher, Christopher, I say! Do you hear me? Christopher, the Conqueror of the Sea, Christopher, the Hunter of the Sun! ❖ SECOND GUITAR PLAYER. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Hou! Rrou-cou! Christopher. His Excellency, the Treasurer of the Setting Sun! Christopher, glittering with gold and jewels! Ho, failure! Hi, broken! Hi, wreck! Pay your debts, pay your debts, pay your debts, pay your debts, pay your debts, Christopher! ❖ THIRD GUITAR

delirious

Meanwhile Christopher Columbus (on the scene and on the screen) leans eagerly over the old man and tries to make him speak. You see the two heads on the screen. The lips of the old man are moving. He dies.

He is alone near the window, he looks at the Atlantic Ocean and at the wide golden roadway which the setting sun spreads on the waters.





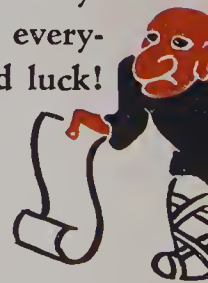
PLAYER. Hou! Hou! Hou! Hou! Hou! Rrou-cou! Rrou-cou! The wide ocean—it is too much for you. Better stay at home with your maps and books! Let others drink their fill of the sea. Better stay quietly at home and fatten on the good money of fools. Good morning, Christopher. Pigeons are no ducks! Better stay quietly at home near my lady Dove! ❖ FIRST MONEY LENDER. Pay your debts, Sir! ❖ SECOND MONEY LENDER. Pay your debts, Sir! ❖ THIRD MONEY LENDER. Pay your debts, Sir! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Money? I have no money! ❖ FIRST MONEY LENDER. Pay your debts, Sir! ❖ SECOND MONEY LENDER. Pay your debts, Sir! ❖ THIRD MONEY LENDER. Pay your debts, Sir! ❖ CHORUS. Pay your debts, Sir! Pay your debts! Pay your debts! Pay your debts! Pay your debts, Christopher Columbus! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Money? I have no money. Only gold! All the setting sun's uncoined gold! I give it to you. ❖ FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD MONEY LENDERS. He is crazy! He is crazy! He is crazy! ❖ CHORUS. He is crazy! He is crazy! ❖



*Screams and laughter
from the Chorus.
Deep-bellied chuckles
mixed with screeching
peals of laughter.*



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Hear me, gentlemen. Crazy or not crazy, I have nothing else to offer. Let me sail westward. My plan is worked out. The wise man of Pisa approves of it. I can show you his letter. I have the sworn statement of these two sailors in Palos before a notary public. You have no other chance to see your beloved money back. The King of Spain has just conquered Granada. Is it so unthinkable that he is a bit jealous of his brother Portugal who has just fished so tremendous a catch from the sea? Such a great King can take a few risks. What are a few rotten ships to him? Or the lives of a few scurvy sailors? I swear he will give me the ships. You have no other chance to see your blessed money back. Give me more money! Give me money and I will storm the King of Spain. ❖ ACCUSER. Traitor! A traitor always! A traitor to Portugal as he was a traitor to Genoa! ❖ FIRST MONEY LENDER. Hard luck! Hard luck indeed! I call that regular hard luck. But I see no other way. Better, I call that a regular squeeze. But better a little squeezing than to lose everything! ❖ SECOND MONEY LENDER. Hard! Hard! Hard! Hard! Hard luck!



Hard luck! But better a little squeezing than to lose everything! ❖ THIRD MONEY LENDER. A tiny little chance! A precious tiny little chance! I call that a precious tiny little chance! But still a chance! I tell you what I think. Better accept squeezing than to lose everything! ❖ SEMI-CHORUS, *thundering*. Better accept squeezing than to lose everything! Hou! Hou! Rrou-cou! Rrou-cou! Hail, Christopher! You know more than every sailor, my precious darling ducky tailor! Rrou-cou! Christopher! Pay your debts, pay your debts, pay your debts, Christopher! ❖ SEMI-CHORUS. Hard, hard, hard, hard luck! But better accept squeezing than to lose everything! Hard, hard, hard luck!



XIII CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS STORMS THE KING OF SPAIN. ❖ READER. Ladies and Gentlemen, here is the staircase leading to the presence of the King of Spain. A very hard staircase. The staircase of Kings is always a very hard staircase. All these gentlemen on the staircase are courtiers and soldiers and all sorts of scholars and learned men. Enter our friend, Christopher. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I ask leave to see the King of Spain. ❖ THE MARSHAL OF THE PALACE. Who are you, Sir? And what do you ask from the King of Spain? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I have nothing to ask from the King of Spain. I have something to give him. ❖ MARSHAL.

The Moors have been driven away. Granada is taken, all Spain from the Pyrenees to the Columns of Hercules belongs to the King of Spain, and you, Sir, you say you have something to offer to the King of Spain? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Spain is such a small thing after all. ❖ CHORUS, *jeering and laughing in low voice*. Who is that impudent fellow? It is the crank. The man from Genoa! The man from Lisbon! Rrou-cou! It is the pigeon! It is Christopher! Christopher is come to give another kingdom to the King of Spain. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Spain has become too small for His Majesty. ❖ MARSHAL. And what have you to offer to His Majesty which is bigger than Spain? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. The whole round Earth. ❖ CHORUS, *as before*. Rrou-cou! Rrou-cou! Christopher! Christopher! He has a hole in his sleeve! His collar is worn. Behold the man who offers the whole Earth to the King of Spain! ❖ MARSHAL. The Earth belongs to God. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I am wedded to the Will of God. ❖ MARSHAL. And where is the token of this holy betrothal? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Here on my finger. See the ring which a dove has brought to me!



❖ CHORUS, *as before*. Christopher! Christopher! Rrou-cou! Here is the illustrious Christopher who has come down to us from his exalted roost.

❖ A YOUNG MAN. Keep that ring for your wife, Christopher. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I have no wife.

With that ring I will wed the Earth. ❖ COSMOGRAPHER, *pompously*. Your name, as I understand, is Christopher Columbus. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Just so. It means a dove and a Christ-bearer. ❖ COSMOGRAPHER. And your plan is to sail westward to reach India? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I was sent to reunite the Earth.



❖ COSMOGRAPHER. This country of yours, is it not enough for you? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I have no other country but the Earth of God. ❖ COSMOGRAPHER. Is it not written that the man who tries to plumb the mystery of God will perish? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. God, by my hand, is trying to reach God. ❖ COSMOGRAPHER. Perhaps the earth is not round. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I say it is a round and perfect thing. ❖ COSMOGRAPHER.



Do you not feel a chance of error? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

There is no error for the man who follows the sun. ❖ A YOUNG MAN.

Is it not India that you will try to reach? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

India, yes; I have only to stretch out my hand. ❖ YOUNG MAN.

Is not India eastward? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Yes, it is behind me. ❖ YOUNG MAN. Well, if India is eastward why do you sail westward? ❖ CHORUS, *laughter*. Good! Good! Very Good! ❖ AN OLD

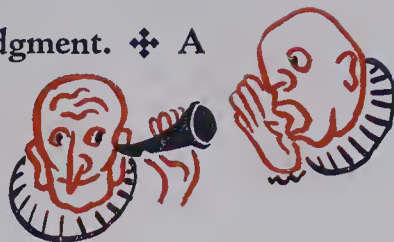


Angry muttering
of the crowd.



MAN. This young fellow is full of good judgment. ❖ A YOUNG MAN. When I want to go to Murcia I don't ask the way to Badajoz. ❖ CHORUS.

Good! Good! Very good! ❖ AN OLD MAN. What does he say? ❖ ANOTHER MAN. He says Murcia. ❖ AN-



OTHER OLD MAN. He says Badajoz. ❖ OLD MAN. He is mixing Murcia and Badajoz. ❖ OLD MAN. Ha! Ha! Ha! ❖ CHORUS. The way to Murcia is not the way to Badajoz. It is a long way to Badajoz! It is a long, long way from Murcia to Badajoz! ❖ CHRISTOPHER CO-

LUMBUS. I want to see the King of Spain. ❖ MARSHAL. State your business. His Majesty is busy. Come later. Come tomorrow. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I am the dove in the hand of His Majesty. Let him but open his hand, and from an unknown shore across the sea I shall return bearing a green branch. ❖ MARSHAL. Tomorrow. ❖ CHORUS, *laughing*. Tomorrow! Tomorrow! *Mañana! Mañana! Mañana!* Come tomorrow, Sir! ❖ MARSHAL, *in a low voice*. Have you any money? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I have a little money. ❖ MARSHAL, *singing with a dulcet voice*. A little money is good! A great deal of money is better! In order to see His Majesty there are many stairs and there are many doors. There are many things to open, many things to close! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I'll give you all the money you want. ❖ MARSHAL, *with a ravished expression*. A little money, a little money to obtain from His Majesty the freedom of the Earth. It is not much, indeed, it is not much!

(*Exeunt omnes.*)



XIV

ISABELLA AND SANTIAGO. ❖ **READER.** And now here is Queen Isabella herself whom History has called the Catholic. She has come to church to pray. Granada has just been taken from the Moors, and the mind of the pious Queen is still full of those recent, so eventful days. ❖ **ISABELLA** (*or somebody in the chorus speaking or singing for her*). Now, now, my Heavenly Father, my day's work is done and it is not just that I should live longer. I gave Aragon in holy wedlock to Castile, and both of us, I, who am Aragon, and Ferdinand who is Castile, have taken back the whole of Spain, the whole of Spain, O Lord, and we have given it to you. Is it not enough? And is it not time for me to listen to that secret voice in the innermost part of my soul and of my body which says that it is time for Isabella to pass over to you, O my Maker! ❖ **CHORUS.** ❖ **ISABELLA.** My wonted response has failed me, that faint "Yes" to which my heart has grown accustomed. ❖ **CHORUS.** *A constantly increasing murmur comes from the Chorus, like someone who tries to speak without finding words and achieves only a growing and vanishing whisper.* ❖ **ISABELLA.** Still I hear no response. ❖ **CHORUS,** *as before, but a few syllables begin to be confusedly heard.* Isabella! Isabella! ❖ **ISABELLA.** Reply, O Lord, for your servant is listening. ❖ **CHORUS.** Isabella, Queen of Spain! Isabella, Isabella, Queen of Spain! Queen for thee? for thee alone? and for thy own glory? ❖ **ISABELLA.** Not for me alone and not for my own glory. What is Spain and what am I but tools in the hands of the Almighty. ❖



On the window in front of her which is also a screen, appear intermingled with each other, obliquely or in projection, pictures of recent events, crowds, troops fighting, processions, bird's-eye views of Granada and Andalusia, all in rather swift motion. And then once, twice, several times, the capitulation of the Moorish Sultan, bringing the keys of Granada, and the Image of Spain delivered from the Moors.

On the window screen is seen the fading image of Santiago and a dove over his head.



Santiago is seen on
the window screen in
the shape of a war-
rior riding, sword in
hand.

Santiago is seen on
the window screen as
a pilgrim with
Compostello in the
far distance.

CHORUS. Isabella! Isabella! I am San-
tiago! James, the brother of John, and the son of the Thunder! ❖ ISABELLA. I
humbly listen to you, my Lord. ❖ CHORUS. Do you remember Las Navas? ❖ ISA-
BELLA. I remember. You rode sword in hand in front of the Spanish Crusaders.
❖ CHORUS. James is not a warrior only, but a pilgrim. ❖ ISABELLA. I know,
and all Christendom as far as Compostello on the seashore knows the Path of St.
James. ❖ CHORUS. Isabella! Isabella! Is the sea everlastingly to stop the Son of
Zebedæus? ❖ ISABELLA. Over the sea only the sun is allowed to pass. ❖
CHORUS. Peter walked over the sea. What he did, I can do. The sun over the
waves makes ready the path for me, and from east to west rolls out a splendid carpet.
And you, Isabella, why do you stop me? Why do you hold me? ❖ ISABELLA.
Hold you, my Lord? ❖ CHORUS. Isabella! Isabella! On the other shore of the
sea I hear the call of millions! The call of my brother Thomas who died on the sea-
shore, stretching his arms toward the East. ❖ ISABELLA. Will you cross the Ocean
dry shod as Moses crossed the Red Sea? ❖ CHORUS. What feet cannot do, wings,
wings can do. What the steed of Las Navas cannot do, the Dove can do. ❖ ISA-
BELLA. I see no other Dove but the Dove in the window over thy head. ❖
CHORUS. Has not God sent to you a dove and a Christ-bearer? ❖ ISABELLA.
I do not know what you mean. ❖ CHORUS. Isabella, what is that ring on thy fin-
ger? ❖ ISABELLA. My husband gave it to me in exchange for the one I gave him.
❖ CHORUS. And where is the other ring? ❖ ISABELLA. I remember. I was a
child then. The sea was so beautiful that I wished to marry it. I remember that ring.
I tied it to the leg of a dove. ❖ CHORUS. Never to see it again? ❖ ISABELLA.
Never to see it again. No! No!—Yes! Yes! I saw it again! Yes, I saw it again! ❖
CHORUS. Where did you see it again? ❖ ISABELLA. I saw it again on the finger
of that poor crazy man who came the other day to ask me to make him king of the
other world. ❖ CHORUS. And what was the name of that poor crazy man? ❖ ISA-
BELLA, *rising*. Christopher Columbus! His name was Christopher Columbus! His
name was Christopher Columbus!





XV THE RECRUITS. ❖ READER. The three ships of Christopher Columbus are ready to sail. Here is the port of Cadiz in Spain. ❖

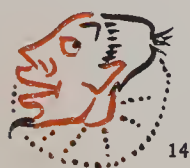
A port, with all that is implied in the word—ships, boats, sails,
banners and riggings, anchors, guns, ropes,
heaps of ropes, barrels, merchandise of every description,
frames of ships in process of building. On the right are seen two big posters.
The first is a fanciful picture showing a country, half China and half India,
under palm trees with Spanish soldiers and monks disembarking.

The second one is an advertisement for recruits, in big letters.

A group of soldiers, sailors, gentlemen, and merchants are looking at the posters.



NUMBER ONE. Is it true that His Majesty is patron of this expedition? ❖ NUMBER TWO. Her Majesty, rather. I understand that Her Majesty has taken a kind of fancy to this stranger. ❖ NUMBER THREE. Well, the sea is quite the fashion nowadays. Such a great King as our King can afford to take risks now and then. ❖ NUMBER FOUR. And fork out of the frying pan of the sea a juicy kingdom, dripping grease and oil. ❖ NUMBER FIVE. No risks for him. Three rotten ships, eighty rogues, and the skin of a Genoese tailor. ❖ NUMBER SIX. And while all Spain stands gasping, Mr. Tax-Gatherer comes and picks our pockets. ❖ NUMBER SEVEN. Martin Alonzo Pinzon is a very good sailor. I know him. Vincent Yanez Pinzon is a very good sailor. Sensible men, both of them; not likely to dream dreams. ❖ NUMBER EIGHT. Well, I put two hundred gold dollars into the venture. ❖ NUMBER NINE. I, myself, put in four hundred. I told my father-in-law to put in four hundred. ❖ NUMBER TEN. Gil Almanzor is the ship chandler. A very good piece of business. I saw the victuals. Very good victuals, considering half of them are paid for. ❖ NUMBER ELEVEN. Everything is *credit* and *credo* in this blessed expedition. ❖ NUMBER TWELVE. Only Christopher is a staunch believer. Did you hear him? I should like to believe so firmly in another world. My foster brother is master cannoneer on the *Pinta*. I gave him a new suit of clothes. ❖ NUMBER THIRTEEN. I wonder if it is true that the King has made him an Admiral and Vice-King of all India on the other side of the horizon. ❖ NUMBER FOURTEEN. Look at that brand new banner! Hail to His Lordship, the *Adelantado*! Hail to the King of Coccagne and the Sultan of the islands of Oltraluna! ❖ VOICES, behind the scene shouting: Make room! Make room! ❖





Enter a cortege.

First halberd
bearers. Then

drums and fifes.

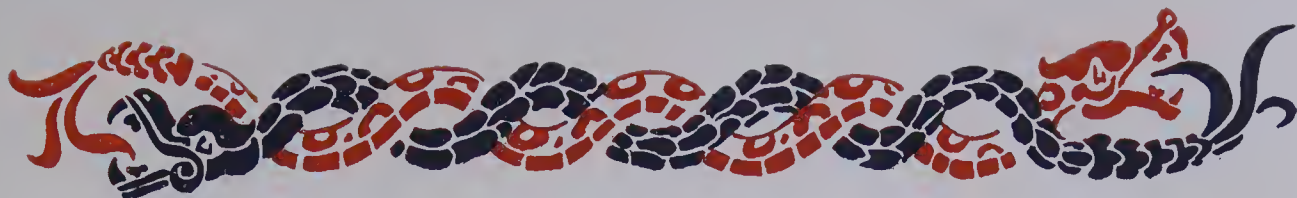
Then men carrying
on their shoulders a
big sail yard with its
rigging. Then other
men pompously car-
rying coffers and
barrels, goats and
pigs, with their four
feet tied together.



NUMBER ONE. And who are

those six fellows all in a row? ❖ NUMBER TWO. Recruits, recruits for the *Santa Maria*! ❖ NUMBER THREE. What is the matter? Why do they all hold their breeches with two hands? ❖ NUMBER FOUR. All the buttons have been cut. ❖ NUMBER FIVE. All the buttons are cut, they cannot get away. Ho! Ho! ❖ RECEIVING OFFICER. Those are the chaps from Carthage? ❖ RECRUITING AGENT. The keeper of the jail is a dirty Arab. Six, six, six golden dollars to get those birds. But I dare say when they are properly washed and pressed they will be a credit to His Lordship the *Adelantado*. ❖ RECEIVING OFFICER. What about my order for Sevilla? ❖ RECRUITING OFFICER. Nothing to be done. He is hanged. It is a pity. He was a splendid sailor, the saltiest rover that ever rowed on the galleys of Barbarossa. ❖ RECEIVING OFFICER. Don't forget to go to hell tonight and fork me some sinner out of the pitch caldron!





XVI *THE GODS CHURN THE SEA.* ❖ **READER.** And now it is time to find out what is happening in America at the moment when the long night previous to its birth is drawing to a close and when the first ray of sun will give it back to Life and Humanity. Hark! The underground thunder is rumbling, the mountains are shaken! Hideous temples are crumbling! Vitzliputzli falls headlong! On the seashore are gathering the foul gory gods of darkness, the diseased and bloodthirsty monsters. They look anxiously toward the East! ❖



THE BEADLE.

Huichtlipochtli! ❖

HUICHTLIPOCHTLI.

Here I am! ❖



BEADLE. Quetzalcoatli! ❖

QUETZALCOATL. Here! ❖

BEADLE. Tlaloc! ❖

TLALOC. Here! ❖

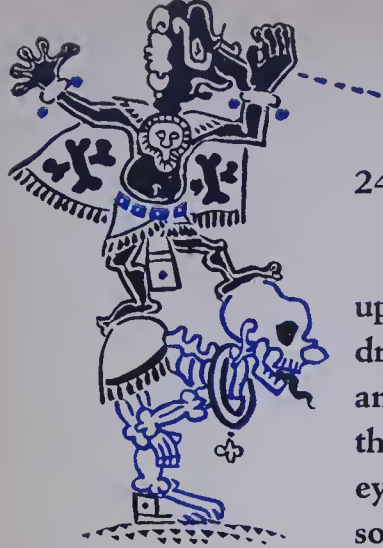


BEADLE. Ixtlipetzloc! ❖

IXTLIPETZLOC. Here! ❖

BEADLE. Where is Panchacamac? ❖ **IXTLIPETZLOC.** He is manufacturing fog by frying glaciers at the end of a fork. ❖ **BEADLE.** Where is Rxtxtchl—Krktxkchtli—the plague take them! Where the devil did they find names like that? *He spits.* ❖





Blackasdeath
climbs on Dryas-
dust with a sickening
sluggishness.

IXTLIPETZLOC. He upsets the compass. He puts bugs in the flour. He breeds maggots on salt beef. He drinks the water. He sours the wine. He inoculates the crew with fever, madness, and despair. ❖ BEADLE. You lie! Christopher Columbus has not even now left the shores of Spain! ❖ IXTLIPETZLOC. I humbly apologize. I have such wretched eyesight, and I can see only things very far off. ❖ BEADLE. What a fool! Is there some clear-sighted fellow here who can see what Christopher Columbus is doing? ❖



BLACKASDEATH. Lend me your back, Dryasdust! ❖ DRYASDUST. Here I am, Blackasdeath! Put the Evening Star Lucifer in your right eye to see better. ❖



BLACKASDEATH. Here I am! I see Palos! I see Chr—— Chr—— I cannot spit out that name! I see the three *caravellas* all ready to sail. I see the *Pinta*, the *Nina*, and the *Santa Ma—— Ma——* I cannot say that name! ❖ BEADLE. What are they doing? ❖ BLACKASDEATH. On the bridge of the *Santa Ma—— Ma——* Hell! I see a priest who has just finished saying mass. On the altar is a sheet of paper. On the sheet of paper all the officers and men put their names, signs, and crosses, all written with their blood. Cannons roar. I see His Lordship, the Royal Governor of Palos, standing at the bow of his boat; he salutes the ship with his feathered hat. ❖ TLALOC. Hou! Hou! I feel cold all over! I feel warm all over! I feel creepy all over! Hear my teeth chattering. ❖ IXTLIPETZLOC. My stomach aches! I have a

This is seen on the
screen.



kind of wormy feeling between my spleen and kidneys which is quite uncomfortable! ❖ QUETZALCOATL. Hou! Hou! We were so comfortable in America, ever since the creation of the World. ❖



ANOTHER. To think of that blockhead hitting by chance upon all we have hidden with such trouble and tender care! And he does not even know what it is! ❖ ANOTHER. You, Sun God! What do you say? You look rather sad and tearful! ❖



HUICHTLIPOCHTLI. Alas! Alas! When Baal and Apollo went out of fashion in the old world, I had found such a nice, cozy place here in Mexico. Alas! Alas! for the good meals of tender human flesh, for the good, warm blood, the splendid Aztec caldron! That throbbing heart which the High Priest drew for me out of a mountain of warm corpses, what a fine morsel! I am through now with my diet of warm blood gushing fresh from the wound! ❖ BEADLE. Well, before Master Chr—— before Master Chr——. The plague on him! Before Master Chr—— is through with America, I have prepared for him a nice piece of machinery all ready to work. Come here! Come here! I say, all you Gods from the North and South, Gods of the root and Gods of the leaf, of the dust and of the mud, copper Gods! Boracic Gods! Ammoniacal Gods! Gods of hunger and black vomit. You all, parrots, tapirs, toucans, trunks and beaks! Volcanic workers! Cordillera-shakers! You of the Scorpion Tail who prick to frenzy the monstrous dancer Antarctis! ❖ ALL GODS. Here we are! Hhe-hhan! Hhe-hhan! ❖ BEADLE. Catch that rope, gentlemen. Our comrades in Africa hold the other end. Ready? Remember the time when with the Naga Snake we churned the primeval sea! Look out! All together! Stand by, my hearties! Hhe-hhan! Hhe-hhan! ❖



Mew means must be used here to give an impression of disorder and chaos. Moving mirrors, revolving and deforming mirrors, moving pictures on moving painted screens, the hideous gods all mixed, sometimes feet upward, mingled with the stormy waves.

All the gods tied to a monstrous rope engage in a tug of war with ever increasing strength and speed, producing an awesome, rasping noise.



They pull and slack the rope, all the devilish machinery working with monstrous strength. A devil is marking time with a gong. Along the front of each column little devils scamper, fanning the workers or beating and pricking them.

The word "mutiny" is read on the curtain, and even before the curtain is raised mutiny has begun in the Chorus. Grumbings, groans, whisperings, an angry and anxious mixing of voices. Words and feelings make themselves heard during all the following scenes, the leading ideas expressed or unexpressed being as follows:

BEADLE. Good! Good! Good! Good! Fine! Fine! Fine! Fine! Hell! Hell! Hell! Pull! Pull! Pull! Harder and harder! Bitterer and bitterer! Look out, you in the sky, you, the heaven-damned brothers! ❖ ALL GODS. Hhe-hhan! Hhe-hhan! Hhe-hhan! Hhe-hhan! ❖ BEADLE. Beat them! Prick them! Bite them to death! Hurrah! It is going strong. The whole sea looks like milk and suds from Amazon's mouth down to the Cape of Storms! Go strong, my hearties! Hell! What a salad! What a clam chowder! We will see what Mr. Chr—— what Mr. Chr—— is going to do in that boiling and raging caldron with his three sticks of ships!

XVII THE MUTINY. ❖ READER. I turn another leaf.



The sea! The sea! Always the sea and nothing to be seen! Westward, westward, always, always westward! Always that awful breeze blowing westward. We shall die, all of us! We shall never come back. Christopher! Christopher! What

are you doing with us? Why did you bring us here? Enough! It is enough! We must turn back home. We will force you to bring us back home. He is crazy! Crazy! Crazy! Down with the crazy man! Take back the ship homeward! Traitor! Fool! Murderer! Always, always the sea. Always that nothingness and nothing but nothingness. Nothing all around but nothingness! We are lost among nothingness! ❖



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What do you want, gentlemen? ❖ DELEGATE. The flour is nearly exhausted. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Eat salt beef. ❖ DELEGATE. The salt beef is spoiled. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Well, console yourself by drinking a cup of wine to the health of His Majesty ❖ DELEGATE. No more wine. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Drink water. ❖ DELEGATE. No more water. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. That's fine. As there is no more salt beef, you don't need any more water. And about that damned salt buffalo of the Guadalquivir, I have only one thing to say, gentlemen, and I am sure you will understand me. It disagreed with the inner man. ❖ DELEGATE. The crew does not want to go any farther. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. The crew is not going, it is the wind which makes them go. ❖ DELEGATE. The wind is what frightens them. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Why, it is a fine breeze. Since we left the Azores it is always the same breeze, the same fine breeze blowing uninterruptedly westward. ❖ DELEGATE. It frightens the crew. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Christopher, my holy patron, what a fine rabble! What a pretty bunch of men! ❖ DELEGATE. They want to go back home. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I am pained and shocked to hear you. If you please, what would you do in my place? ❖ DELEGATE. I would call a meeting of the Elders. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Good. When you don't know what to do, always call a meeting. Do you say there is no more water? ❖ DELEGATE. Almost none. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Or wine or biscuit or salt beef? ❖ DELEGATE. None to speak of. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Or blood in your veins? ❖ DELEGATE. No more blood. They are frightened. There is no courage against God. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. You lie! Blood remains. ❖ DELEGATE.

The curtain is raised. Christopher Columbus is seen in the full dress of an Admiral sitting among his officers. He receives the delegates of the crew.

Chorus.

Chorus.

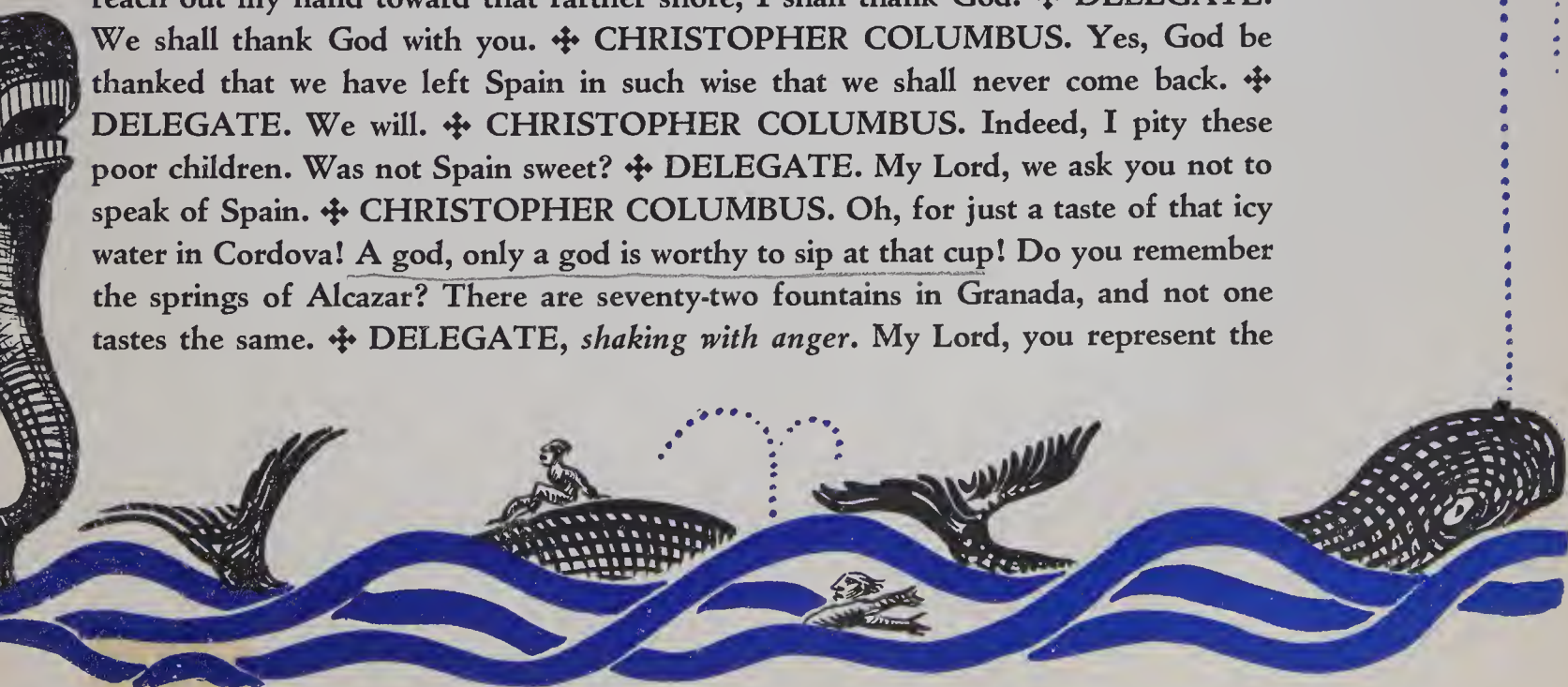


Nothing remains but the sea everywhere. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Blood remains. I mean the blood of your marks on a sheet of paper. When I can put that blood back again into your cowardly veins, then I shall give you back your word. ❖ DELEGATE. We humbly pray your Lordship to give us back our word. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What frightens you? ❖ DELEGATE. Nothing. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. So you are frightened by nothing? ❖ DELEGATE. We are frightened by nothingness. We have passed the limit beyond which there is no limit. No more land, no more sea, nothing but nothingness. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Nothing! A very sweet word, by God, sweet sounding in my ears. And you call yourselves sailors! What is a sailor's life if not an endless going away and never arriving anywhere? Well, I pray God to forgive me, but were it not for His Holy Will, were it not for the orders which I received from Him, yes, I should almost regret to see land appear over the prow of my ship, as by and by it will appear. I say to you that if I had my wish I should like to go away so utterly that there would be no turning back. Oh, I shall never have enough of that endless and empty expanse. When, oh, when shall I go away forever? I declare that if I had my will you would never see land again. ❖ DELEGATE. You must call the council of Elders and Officers. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And what do you expect those gentlemen to say? ❖ DELEGATE. They will say that God is not to be tempted. They will say that we must return. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What does Martin Alonzo say? ❖ DELEGATE. He says we must go home. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And Martin Alonzo is a true sailor. ❖ DELEGATE. He is a true Spaniard. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Not only a true Spaniard but a tried sailor who has spent his whole life on ships. The real stuff. Nothing of the amateur, nothing of the adventurer. Not one of those so-called navigators who are not able to read the map or to take a course by the stars. ❖ DELEGATE. We trust him. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And what is Christopher Columbus after all? A crank, a dreamer, an expatriate, a tailor, a visionary, a cheat, an ignoramus, something between a thief, a monk, and a mattress mender. ❖ DELEGATE. We trust Martin Alonzo Pinzon. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. You are frightened, but if you knew what I know you would be much more frightened.

✦ DELEGATE. Madonna! What more? ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Since yesterday the magnet is mad. It turns in every direction. The north no longer exists for it. ✦ DELEGATE. Just as I said—nothing is left. Our Lady of Palos, have mercy on us! ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. So I threw that foolish toy into the sea! ✦ DELEGATE. You threw the compass into the sea? ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. There is always the sun! ✦ DELEGATE. Admiral, we ask you to turn the ships backward. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. You ask, you beg. Why? Did you not say that every soul on board, the Officers, the Elders, and the crew, are all of one and the same mind and that we must go back? ✦ DELEGATE. We must go back! Let us go back! Let us go back home! ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Who is stopping you? I am alone. Only I. I am the only one who wants to go farther. Why don't you make me walk the plank? ✦ DELEGATE, *kneeling*. Admiral, humbly kneeling at your feet, we pray and entreat you to go back. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I hate to see people kneeling. ✦ DELEGATE. On your knees! On your knees, all of you, comrades, and pray our Admiral to let us go back. ✦ ALL, *kneeling*. Let us go back! Let us go back! ✦ AN OFFICER. Man, the son of woman, is not made to ply in this awful fashion in the midst of nothingness. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Friends and comrades, stand up! I look at you and I say that I do indeed pity you. ✦ DELEGATE, *sullen and resolute*. You must go back! ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. If only you knew the man to whom your life is committed! ✦ DELEGATE. We know him too well. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Dogs! Your lives and the lives of your females and your children—I care not a fig for them! ✦ DELEGATE. We humbly thank your Lordship. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. You can die for all I care! Nobody will ever get back! ✦ DELEGATE. We know that very well. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And I will say more. May I, myself, die, and may all the curses of the sea and of this unknown world pile up over my head! If only I can reach out my hand toward that farther shore, I shall thank God. ✦ DELEGATE. We shall thank God with you. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Yes, God be thanked that we have left Spain in such wise that we shall never come back. ✦ DELEGATE. We will. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Indeed, I pity these poor children. Was not Spain sweet? ✦ DELEGATE. My Lord, we ask you not to speak of Spain. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Oh, for just a taste of that icy water in Cordova! A god, only a god is worthy to sip at that cup! Do you remember the springs of Alcazar? There are seventy-two fountains in Granada, and not one tastes the same. ✦ DELEGATE, *shaking with anger*. My Lord, you represent the

Chorus.

Chorus.

All
stand
up.



He draws his
sword.

King here; but patience has its limits, and if you say one word more I shall kill you. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Oh, for the melons of the Vega! Oh, for the pomegranates of San Lucar! Oh, for those mottled grapes of Triana! ❖ DELEGATE. I will give you a taste of my grapes, you bottle-nosed devil, you white-haired rascal! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I want no grapes and I rejoice in thirst. Yes, I truly rejoice in this country of thirst and salt beef. Put back that little sword in its place, my son! ❖ DELEGATE. Are you a man or a spirit that feels neither hunger nor thirst? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I am athirst for the sea, and what I hunger for is the Will of God. ❖ DELEGATE. We have fallen into cruel and frightful hands. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What if you knew the man who is my own master? All I do is to obey. ❖ DELEGATE. Who is he? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. An unjust and pitiless tyrant! Would to God I had never met him! ❖ DELEGATE. What is his name? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. A harsh master! I shall accuse him some day before the throne of God. When I was living in Genoa, do you not think I would have preferred to stay in my motherland with my brothers? And when I lived in Lisbon, would I not have preferred to enjoy the sweet company of my beloved wife? He! He is the man who leaves me no rest and who is forever dragging me farther and farther. ❖ DELEGATE. Who is this pitiless man? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *showing with his finger Christopher Columbus 2 on the proscenium*. His name is Christopher Columbus! I accuse him before God! ❖ AN OFFICER. Do not jest. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I am not jesting. ❖ OFFICER. Stop jesting and answer that man who addresses you on behalf of all of us. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I refuse. ❖



OFFICER. Do not drive us to despair!
 ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I refuse to answer. ✦ OFFICER. In that case we shall make our terms known to you. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Let me know your terms. ✦ OFFICER. We grant you three days. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And for three days I shall remain the sole commander of these ships? ✦ OFFICER. For three days you will remain the sole commander of these ships. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Enough. These are my orders. How much water, did you say? ✦ OFFICER. Just enough for a few days. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Drink to your hearts' content, gentlemen. How many barrels of beef and biscuits remain? ✦ OFFICER. Enough for one month. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Knock out the heads of all the barrels! Eat and drink! I offer you a great feast tonight. ✦ OFFICER. Give us a sign, Christopher! ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Look. *A bird is seen on the screen, and then on the scene.* ✦ VOICES OF THE CREW, *outside.* A bird! A bird! ✦ CHORUS. A bird! A bird! ✦ VOICES, *outside.* A dove! A pigeon! ✦ CHORUS. A dove! It is a dove! ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *arising.* And the face of the earth was covered with water. And the dove came back to Noah with a green branch in her beak. ✦ A VOICE, *from the upper rigging.* Land ho! ✦ ALL, *rushing forward.* Land! Land! Land! Land!



Chorus—music.

XVIII THE REDEEMER. ✦ READER. My good sirs,
America!

The curtain rising
reveals a tangled mass of palms, ferns, creepers, and dead trees,
in which monkeys and parrots are gamboling and pelicans perching.

It looks as if some enormous body were lying on the
ground behind which is seen the blue sea.

On the right side of the scene is raised a two-faced colossal head.

One of the faces is turned toward the sea and
the other one toward the public. It is built of corroded
stones overgrown with ferns and mangroves.

A big snake is coiled about it.

America murmuring (executed by instruments and Chorus),
unspeakably sad and sullen. The impression is
conveyed by several elements, some sustained and some superimposed,
the former being revealed whenever the latter cease.

On the skyline appear the three sails of Christopher Columbus.

They move nearer and nearer. With the
profound mingled murmur of land, sea, and forest, in which the
feeling of awe and of hope is felt more and more, the song
of the Te Deum begins to be heard from afar.

why?



The ships approach, vomiting flames and smoke, while the cannons roar and the Royal Banner of Castile is unfolded at the high mast.

The song of the Te Deum is distinctly heard: *Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim. . . . Incessabili voce proclamant:—Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus!*

The shouts of the sailors are heard among the howling of the gods in the far distance.





PART TWO

ENTR'ACTE. *The report of the discovery made by Christopher Columbus has traveled to the ends of the earth. Everybody is talking about it. The chorists in great disorder are moving and talking with each other in every corner. Throughout the Entr'acte the Christopher Columbus of the proscenium remains in his place kneeling and praying. The Reader comes back to his pulpit which he had left. He reopens the book and strikes it two or three times with his hand to obtain silence. A trumpeter tries to blow his trumpet but stops abruptly.* ❖ **READER.** America has been discovered and Christopher Columbus has come back in triumph to Spain. Silence! Then followed mistakes and disappointments, more irritating with each new voyage that he made. Silence! No gold was found, only a scanty handful of pearls. The savages, harshly treated, many times slaughtered the invaders who took hideous reprisals. To get workers on these unhealthy lands slavery had to be brought again into the world. Meanwhile Christopher Columbus wanders at random, a distracted spirit in the midst of these new islands and finally reaches, almost unawares, the Continent. More and more enemies, mistrust of the King and high authorities. The hour of trial is come. The King of Spain asks advice from his councilors. Here is the King of Spain and here are the Three Wise Men. I ask for silence!



K



I



II



III

I THE KING OF SPAIN AND THE THREE WISE MEN. ♣ KING. Gentlemen, we have done with the business of Italy, Flanders, and Germany. I will ask of you a few moments more to settle a less important question. I mean Christopher Columbus and those so-called New Indies which he has discovered. ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. Many complaints. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. Much money. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. Much money and few results. ♣ KING. Our Royal Consort, the Queen of Aragon, intercedes for the man. ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. How is Her Majesty? ♣ KING. Ill. Very ill. She will not admit a physician. The end is near. ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. May Holy Angels succor the Queen and bring before the throne of God the soul of the Catholic. ♣ SECOND AND THIRD WISE MEN. Amen! ♣ KING. What think you of Christopher Columbus? ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. He says he is the Ambassador of God. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. He says he has found another world. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. He says that Spain is small. ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. We think that the master is greater than the servant. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. We think that the servant should not look greater than the King. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. We think that people talk too much of Christopher. ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. We think that he has found the unknown. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. We think the unknown is unpleasant. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. We think that no treasure was ever found by an honest man. ♣ KING. What think you of all I did for Christopher and the gift I gave him? ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. Indefinite things are not the same as definite things. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. You gave him this new land. You did not give him Spain to make a new Spain with Old Spain's money. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. After the falcon comes the falconer. The game is not for the dog but for the dog's master. ♣ KING. What am I to do with Christopher? ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. I knew a man in my native city who was called Jaime. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. I heard of a man in Galicia who was called Pedro. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. Elders of my village have not forgotten a man who was called Balthazar. ♣ KING. And tell me what was the matter with Don Jaime, Don Pedro, and Don Balthazar? ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. Jaime played faro once and he won one hundred dollars; he played another time and he lost one thousand dollars. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. Pedro trafficking on the sea won one thousand dollars; and then everybody left house and farm to win ten thousand dollars. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. Balthazar lent one hundred dollars to his servant who went to the Indies and came back richer than his master. ♣ KING. I understand and I thank you. ♣ FIRST WISE MAN. Let us honor Christopher. ♣ SECOND WISE MAN. Let us have an eye on Christopher. ♣ THIRD WISE MAN. Let us bury Christopher.



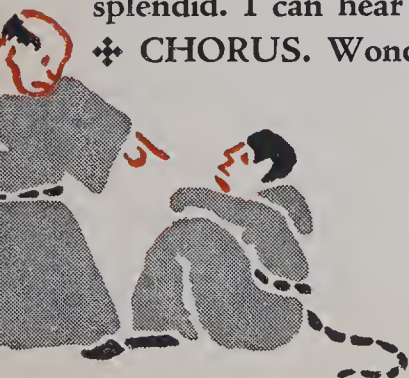
II **DISCUSSION.** ❖ **READER.** Gentlemen, it is simply unbearable. What do you mean by such continuous coming and going and all those private conversations *sotto voce*? Can't you repeat your parts elsewhere? Be quiet, please! It is true I did not want your services in the preceding scene and perhaps I shall not want you for this one. ❖ **CHORIST.** You do not need our services for the following scene? ❖ **READER.** I don't know but I suppose not. ❖ **CHORIST, chuckling.** Well, you will see! ❖ **READER.** We shall see what we shall see. Meanwhile, be quiet! ❖ **CHORIST.** And do you think people sat quiet and sober in Spain as well as in America when Fame's trumpet announced to the four ends of the earth the splendid news of Christopher's discovery? ❖ **ANOTHER CHORIST.** What America?

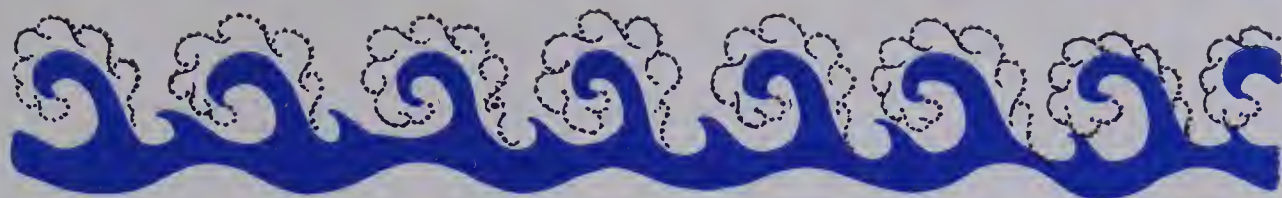


There is no America yet. ❖ **CHORIST.** I beg your pardon, Sir, there is an America. There is a kind of dark, blind America and the foot of Christopher makes it shake. Everybody is on the alert and from both shores of the ocean they try to communicate with each other. This Christopher Columbus of ours who considers this new world as his own thing and property—how ludicrous! He has discovered that the world had one part more than was believed. What of it? Suppose a physician finds in our body some new substance, or suppose he gives back to us the use of a leg. Is that leg ours or the physician's? ❖ **ANOTHER CHORIST.** Mr. Reader, the fact is that these ladies and gentlemen of the chorus are dissatisfied. ❖ **READER.** Why dissatisfied? ❖ **CHORIST.** Everybody expected the Scene, the grand triumphal Scene, when Christopher Columbus returns to Spain. How beautiful! How spectacular! What magnificent choruses! You know. What I call a good effect. I seem to see and hear it. The costumes, savages, Moors, warriors and Spaniards, dancers, bells, trumpets, new world treasures, and Their Gracious Majesties receiving Christopher Columbus. He bows before them, he kisses the hand of the Queen. It would be splendid. I can hear the music now. ❖ **READER.** A ballet? A feast in Granada? ❖ **CHORUS.** Wonderful! Everybody expected it. Just a little ballet would have

Something is vaguely depicted on the screen.

Engaging music.





finish! Outside night and storm on abysmal waters. The ship's captain has come to pay a call on Christopher. With him is the cook. A queer cook. You know, when Christopher had to be manacled they found no man to do the job. A cook did it. Here is the cook. What a storm! Well, try to make out for yourselves what follows. I give up!



❖ CAPTAIN. I came to have news of Your Lordship. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Why are you not on the bridge? ❖ CAPTAIN. Another man

The tempest is growing stronger.



The storm weakens
and the scene re-
appears.

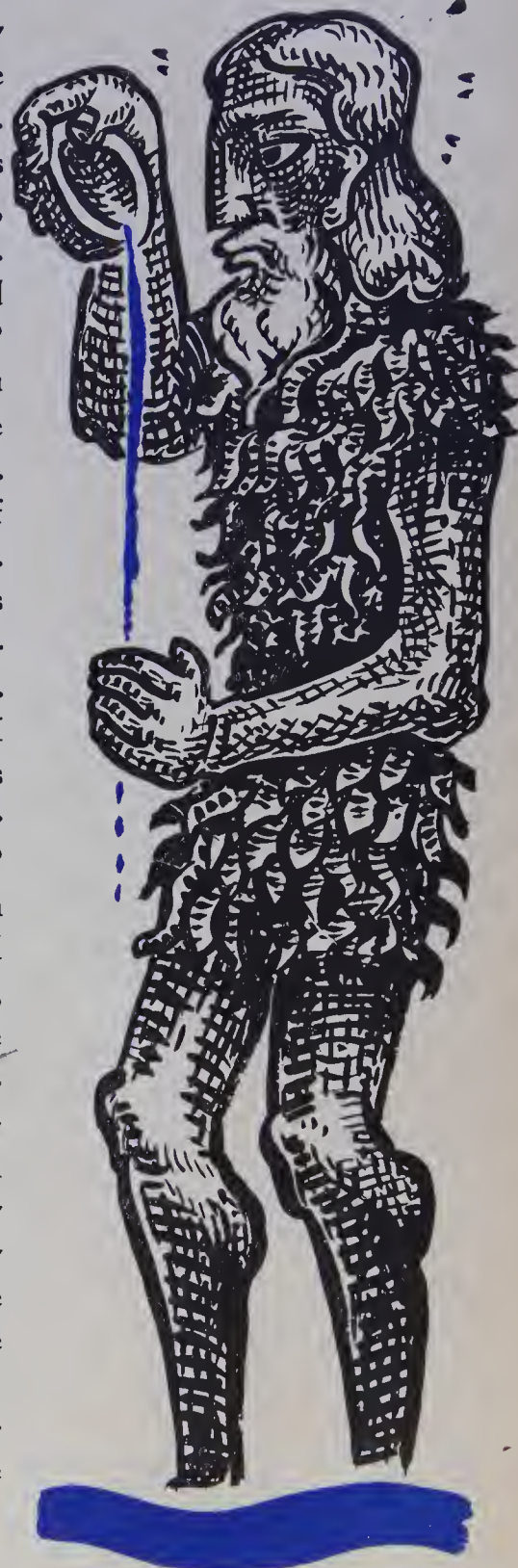
is on the bridge, but my place is at the root of the boat near you, Christopher. Save us, Christopher! Hold fast, Christopher! Hold the mast, Christopher! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Do I hold the boat? ❖ CAPTAIN. As long as you hold the mast the raging chaos can do nothing against us and our ship will find a safe pathway through this bottomless world. ❖ COOK. Did I not do well in chaining him? ❖ CHORUS. Hold fast, Christopher! Hold the mast, Christopher! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I, the old man, the discharged Chief, the maniac, the reprobate in his chains, do you say I was given that mast to hold? ❖ CAPTAIN. If you let go, we are done. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What will be my reward? ❖ CAPTAIN. I may take off your chains. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I don't need any chains. I am tied to that tree by a stronger passion! ❖ CAPTAIN. What passion? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Justice! I call it Justice. I call to the Justice of God! The storm strikes hard at us but it is in my power to uproot the whole fabric! ❖ COOK. Good! Good! A fine word. Uproot the ship, please. Push down the column. Pull out the mast. Do with them as the blind Samson did with the Philistines! ❖ CHORUS. Hold fast, Christopher! ❖ COOK. Drown them. Remember what they did. You gave them a world and they put you in the stocks. Let it go, Christopher! ❖ CHORUS. Hold fast, Christopher! ❖ CAPTAIN. Hear, Christopher. We are in the midst of a threefold storm, we have three shocks to withstand. The first blow comes. It comes, it comes, and my hair is raised on my head. Hell is loose! Stand by! We have to stand the impact of Leviathan. Help! Help! Hold fast, Christopher! Find the word! Find the word, quick! Against Chaos unsheathe the word that cuts in two the waterspout!

The blow comes amidst a frightful howl.
The whole scene is buried in darkness, blue lightnings amongst
smoke and pouring rain.
But Christopher has said something and in the darkness
is written in huge luminous letters the
Verse of Saint John:

IN THE BEGINNING WAS
THE WORD

❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. In the beginning was the Word! In the beginning was the Word! In the name of the Word I raise my voice and command you, blind beasts of the storm! ❖ CAPTAIN. The first blow is past. ❖ COOK. The second blow is coming! ❖ CAPTAIN. The second blow! The second blow! ❖ CHORUS. The second blow is coming! Coming—coming—coming—coming! Help, help, help, help, help! Oh, save us, Christopher! ❖ COOK. Let them go, Christopher. God himself one day repented having created man and loosed the flood against them. Did you discover a New World to give it to Bobadilla? God punished you. You trespassed against the Will of God! You stepped over the line—the line that no man is allowed to pass. Give back to the sea that deep slumber which your footstep has interrupted. Give back to the western sea her maiden's slumber. Hear the sea itself which entreats you. Don't disturb the primal darkness. ❖ CHORUS. Help! Help! Help! Coming—coming—coming! The second blow is coming. Hold fast, Christopher! Save the boat, Christopher! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Do your worst, oh, sea, I am not frightened. I spit on you! Your waves creep and crouch, wallowing at my feet. I am ^{pride} stronger than you are! You are my path and my property. All is over. I put on your neck a chain which shall never be taken away. ❖ COOK. You little man of an hour! Is it you who spit upon the sea? The power of the sea is not exhausted. Between the very top of Heaven and the foundations of Hell, there is a great fund of despair which is still unloosened. The reserve is not exhausted. ❖ CHORUS. Pumps, I say, pumps, pumps, pumps! The sky is crumbling. We fall! We fall! The very sea under our keel is failing us! All things forever lost that are seeking forever their way, coming, coming, they are coming over us! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Even if the whole world should seem to crumble, I shall go through. ❖ COOK. Are you to make a new Heaven and a new Earth? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. My business is not to remake the world but to discover it. ❖ COOK. The world is wicked. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. So much the worse for it then, for I shall unveil it. ❖ CHORUS. Help! Help! Help! Help! Coming—coming—coming! The second blow is coming! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *shouting with all his strength*. There was a man whose name was John!

THERE WAS A MAN
WHOSE NAME WAS JOHN



Second blow.
In a halo the sen-
tence tries to establish
itself and finally
succeeds.

Storm abates.

THE BOOK OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS



✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *shouting*. There was a man whose name was John! There was a man whose name was John! There was a man whose name was Christopher! *Captain has disappeared*. ✦ COOK. The third blow is near. *Complete silence*. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What does that silence mean? ✦ COOK. The center of the typhoon is passing over us. In such cases the wind slackens, silence reigns, stars shine at the top of the sky. They call that the eye of the typhoon. The Eye of Darkness looks at us.

The scene changes.

The whole back scene is a white screen.

IV WITHIN A SOUL. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Where are we? ✦ COOK. Inside of your conscience. *Light shadows pass very swiftly like mist before the wind on the screen*. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I see nothing. ✦ COOK. Look more attentively. *A crowd is passing on the screen as quick as the wind. Feathered heads of savages; savages with bows and arrows*. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What are those passing flakes of mistlike shadows? ✦ COOK. Whole peoples and tribes. The exterminated multitude. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. So much the worse for the fog if it cannot stand the sun. *On the screen groups of black slaves in chains*. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Who are those Ethiopians? ✦ COOK. Slaves. Christopher has again brought slavery into the world. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Do you mean those Indians I tried to sell as slaves in Sevilla? ✦ COOK. Hail to the slave driver! ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I sinned. But I had no gold. I came back goldless from the west. I had to pay with something. Am I not in chains myself? ✦ COOK. You paid with souls. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I promised to take darkness out of the world, but never suffering. ✦ COOK. I see men sold as cattle. I see Africa sending to the new world shiploads of human flesh. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. In this way, not America only, but Africa I gave back to humanity. ✦ COOK. Do you mean the way of suffering? ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Through suffering, if there is no other way.

THE BOOK OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

On the screen a group of mixed and confused shadows.

A WOMAN. Christopher, I am your loving wife. Why did you leave me? ❖

ANOTHER WOMAN. And I am your mother. Why did you leave me? ❖

A YOUNG MAN. Why did you make me leave Lisbon? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

Illusions! There is nobody here. I see nothing but my shadow on the screen. *Indeed nothing is seen but a shadow on the screen.* ❖ SHADOW. It is true. I am yourself.

When will you give me rest? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

Go away. I do not wish to look at you. ❖ SHADOW. I am witness

against you. Where did you lead me? Where are the things you

promised to me? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Vile old carcass,

I never promised anything to you. And as for that in you which cannot

cast a shadow on the wall, I held my promise. I promised you the

universe, and I gave it to you. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2.

Well answered, Christopher! Well answered, God-bearer! ❖ COOK.

But what do you mean, *universe?* Christopher, what is it really, this

huge thing you discovered, like something your hand has seized in the

darkness? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I do not know. Yes! Yes!

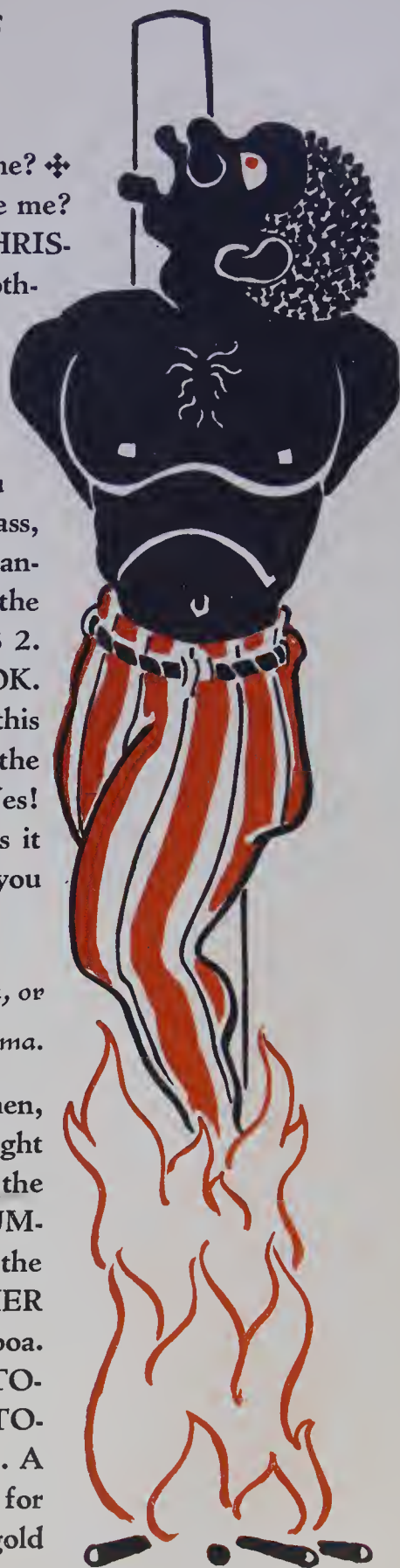
What is it? I thirst to know. Is it the hand of old Mother Asia? Is it

something new? ❖ COOK. Well, I am a good fellow. I will show you

everything with my lantern. ❖

On the screen the earth's globe on which is painted obliquely America, or rather that part of America which is united by the Isthmus of Panama.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Then, here is what I have discovered. Here is the world which I have brought out of nothingness? ❖ READER. Once more the Dove has found the land. *Music and Chorus begin again.* ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. How beautiful! ❖ COOK. The sphere revolves and behind the fate-bound Isthmus another ocean is appearing. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Who found it? ❖ A CHORIST. A man called Balboa. ❖ COOK. A second ocean wider than the first one. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. Never wide enough for me! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Who crossed it? ❖ ANOTHER CHORIST. A man called Magellan. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And as for Christopher, he will never reach Cipango? And those fair islands of gold





and snow which I see here under my hand, they will fail him? ❖ COOK. They will fail you forever. You will not bind the universe together. It is for another man to possess the sphere. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. At least that world which I have discovered will not fail me. I will give it my name. ❖ COOK. I see another name written. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What! How do you call my child and what is its name? ❖ COOK. Do you remember that wretched Italian dealer who traded in tinctorial woods and whose name was Amerigo Vespucci? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I scarcely remember. ❖ COOK. He gave his name to the

New World that you discovered. Its name is America! ❖ CHORUS, *exploding*. America! America! The new name is America! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *beginning the Psalm de Profundis*. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord!"



V LOVE. ❖ CHORUS, *continuing the Psalm*. Lord, hear my voice. ❖ CHORIST. Where are we? ❖ READER. The ship has arrived. Christopher has been delivered. Here is a site in Spain! On the right hand a chapel; on the left a hill on which is to be seen a calvary with three crosses! At the back are trees which give the impression that something is to happen behind them. ❖ MESSENGER. Here we are to stop. Orders of the Queen are that you wait for her here. ❖ CHORIST. Who is that black fellow? ❖ READER. Somebody whom Queen Isabella sent to meet Christopher. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. During those dark hours the confidence of Her Majesty was my only star, her beautiful eyes the only eyes which ever looked at me. ❖ MESSENGER. They are still looking for you. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. How sweet to know after all these dreadful rumors that Her Majesty was so suddenly healed. ❖ MESSENGER. Think of it no more. Her tribulations are ended. ❖ CHORUS, *very low*. *Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication!* ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And to think that even in her dreadful suffering Her Majesty was kind enough to remember her poor servant! ❖ MESSENGER. She thought of nothing but you and those new Indies. Your name was always on her lips—Christopher. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And can you not tell me what are the intentions of Her Grace toward me? ❖ MESSENGER. Endless grace. All that she did for you before is as nothing. She wishes you to exchange your present place for a higher one. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Those new Indies—she alone understands! To her alone I made a present of this new world. ❖ MESSENGER. She took them with her. Her most



precious jewel, she said. "My Christopher's ring at my finger," she said. Her very words. "My ring, never to leave my finger, near the holy token of my marriage." ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. "My Christopher's ring at my finger!" Let me hear that again. ❖ MESSENGER. "My friend Christopher." I am positive of her words. "Say to him, say to him"—I report her very words—"that what he has discovered is as nothing in comparison with that which the Lord has reserved for him."

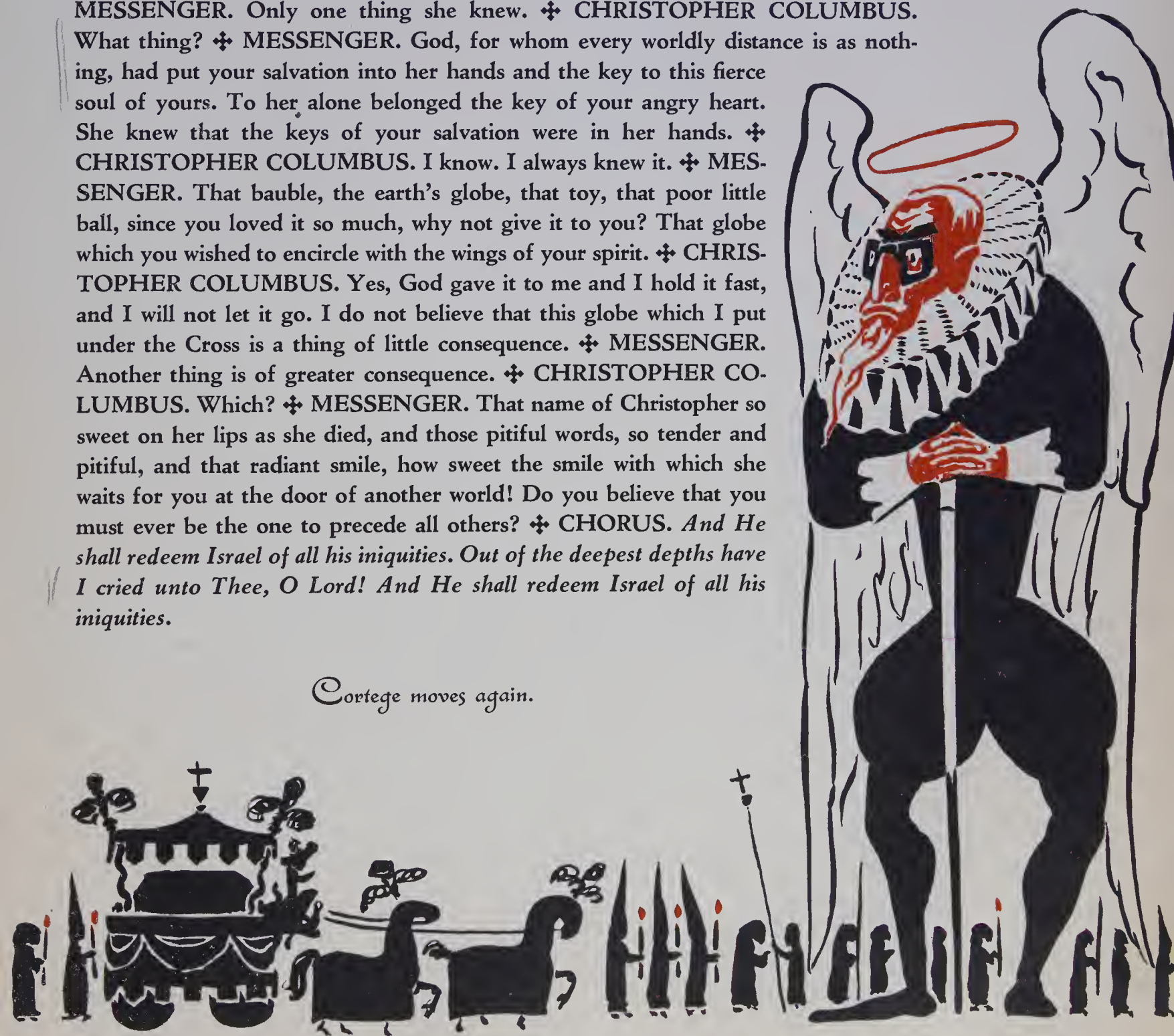
❖ CHORUS. *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Hearing such words my heart should leap with joy. ❖ MESSENGER. Yes, I know, it should leap with sheer joy. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. It only melts. ❖ MESSENGER. Was I not for thee a messenger of joy? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. He who has tasted pain finds it difficult to become accustomed to joy again. ❖ MESSENGER. Forget, Christopher. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I say, it was well worth the price, all this trouble and pain and anxiety of the mind, and the incredible labor, leaving behind family, country, and friends, like half-burnt ships, like useless and worm-eaten carcasses of ships. ❖ MESSENGER. It was worth the price. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. And to discover, beyond any distance that dreams could anticipate, those new lands. It was worth the price. It was worth the price since over there I found these chains! ❖ MESSENGER. Chains of injustice are heavy, but there are other chains heavier still. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Chains on my feet, chains on my hands, chains all around my body, they were well worth my long desires and my infinite travels through the sea! ❖ MESSENGER. The chains of love are heavier still. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. See the wounds they have left. ❖ MESSENGER. A look from your Queen will be enough to heal your wounds. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. For him who has sipped from the cup of bitterness, it is hard indeed to remove his lips. ❖ CHORUS. *But there is forgiveness with Thee and I wait for the Lord!* ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I understand. ❖ CHORUS. *I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning star.* ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. She had no right to die as long as

Slowly behind trees
a funeral cortege
appears; first the
Cross and tapers,
then the pompous
hearse with a retinue
of noblemen.

I needed her. ♣ MESSENGER. Those new Indies beyond the world, old man, they do not need her or you any more, but it may be you still need her. ♣ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. If I still need her, why did she go? ♣ MESSENGER. Your trick of leaving—are you alone to know how to perform it? Are you alone to know desire and longing, longing for another world? You made a road for her through the sea. How could she manage not to follow it? ♣ CHORUS. *For with the Lord is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption.* ♣ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Friend, this longing of mine which devours my heart—she knew it too? ♣ MESSENGER. Only one thing she knew. ♣ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. What thing? ♣ MESSENGER. God, for whom every worldly distance is as nothing, had put your salvation into her hands and the key to this fierce soul of yours. To her alone belonged the key of your angry heart. She knew that the keys of your salvation were in her hands. ♣ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I know. I always knew it. ♣ MESSENGER. That bauble, the earth's globe, that toy, that poor little ball, since you loved it so much, why not give it to you? That globe which you wished to encircle with the wings of your spirit. ♣ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Yes, God gave it to me and I hold it fast, and I will not let it go. I do not believe that this globe which I put under the Cross is a thing of little consequence. ♣ MESSENGER. Another thing is of greater consequence. ♣ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Which? ♣ MESSENGER. That name of Christopher so sweet on her lips as she died, and those pitiful words, so tender and pitiful, and that radiant smile, how sweet the smile with which she waits for you at the door of another world! Do you believe that you must ever be the one to precede all others? ♣ CHORUS. *And He shall redeem Israel of all his iniquities. Out of the deepest depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! And He shall redeem Israel of all his iniquities.*

All stop.

Cortege moves again.



Enter a Servant.



Enter the Inn-keeper.

VI THE INN IN VALLADOLID.

❖READER. The Book is ended. One page only remains unturned. We are again in the Inn of Valladolid. ❖ SERVANT, to Christopher Columbus. Sir, the master says you must pay your bill. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Friend, please say to your master that I, Christopher Columbus, the Admiral of the Western Indies, would be obliged to him for waiting a few days. ❖ SERVANT. The master says you must pay your bill. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. On my first voyage I asked the sailors to wait three days. They waited three days and I discovered a new world. Tell your master to wait three days. ❖ SERVANT. I shall fetch him. ❖ INNKEEPER. My servant says you don't want to pay me. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Take my chains

if you wish. ❖ INNKEEPER. What am I to do with that ironware? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. It is all that I possess in this world. ❖ INNKEEPER. They say that westward you discovered much gold. Out west there, they say the very water is gold. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. It slipped between my fingers. ❖ INNKEEPER. You still have your mule. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Friend, do not take my mule. ❖ INNKEEPER. Then pay your bill. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Hear me, I will pay, I will pay! I beseech you not to take my poor mule. Everybody has forsaken me. I have no friends left. Only that poor brute has not failed me, that mute friend and true servant who believes me and never quarrels, who does everything I ask of him. ❖ INNKEEPER. If you don't pay tomorrow, I will take the mule. ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. ^{Good old Sanchez!} Christopher Columbus, why have you forsaken me? ❖ CHORIST. What does he mean? Is not the man crazy? ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Christopher Columbus is no more. Only a poor man on a straw litter, who humbly asks that his last friend be not taken from him. Leave me my poor old mule for those few hours of life which remain to me! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. I hear you! I am here! ❖ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 1. Why did you leave me? Hear me where you are in everlasting glory. All humanity worships your name while I am dying on a litter of straw, and you cannot even keep my mule, my only friend and last property, from

Exit.



being taken away from me. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. I am coming. I am returning to you. ✦ CHORUS. Christopher, stay with us. Stay with that posterity to which you belong. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. Can you do something for that poor old man who is dying alone and forsaken? ✦ READER. Of you we shall make a god. You will drive over the sea in a golden chariot. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. Can you have his mule restored to him? ✦ READER. We cannot. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 2. Then let me go to him. Let me enjoy my promised reward. I have nothing more to do with you. ✦ CHORUS. Forgive us, Christopher. ✦ CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. May Heaven have pity on me and may the Earth weep over me!* ✦ READER. All is over. ✦ SOMEBODY, *rushing on the scene*. Stop! Stop! Stop! There is one scene more. ✦ READER. It is true! There is one leaf more in the Book.

Curtain half falls.

* Authentic words of Christopher Columbus in one of his last letters.





VII *IN THE PARADISE OF THE IDEA.* ♣ CHORIST. Where are we? ♣ ANOTHER. It seems to me I have seen this country before. ♣ ANOTHER. Yes, just at the beginning of the First Part. ♣ READER. Yes, it is that lovely garden in Majorca where Queen Isabella tied a ring to the leg of a dove. But now look! All is white! Crystal and silver! A landscape of frost, a lace of white silk. Fruits, flowers, leaves, branches, all is silver, with just a trace of lingering color. The soil itself is like powdered sugar. No sense of depth anywhere. Everything is on the same plane. Against the background stand a few cypresses like black glass. Even the actors themselves are white. They are the same as in the First Part. ♣ CHORIST. Is that not a mistake? Haven't you reopened the Book at the first page? ♣ READER. It is true, everything begins anew in light and explanation. Do you not see that everything has become pure and white, painted on light with denser light, as breath becomes frost? Everything is etched in the pure light of the mind and all those holy people before they ascend to the paradise of love will dally for a few moments here in this paradise of the Idea. ♣ CHORIST. So they are not living but dead? ♣ READER. It is we ourselves who are the dead and stinking carrions. ♣ CHORIST. This dear child all bedewed with spirit diamonds and drops of heavenly morning light,

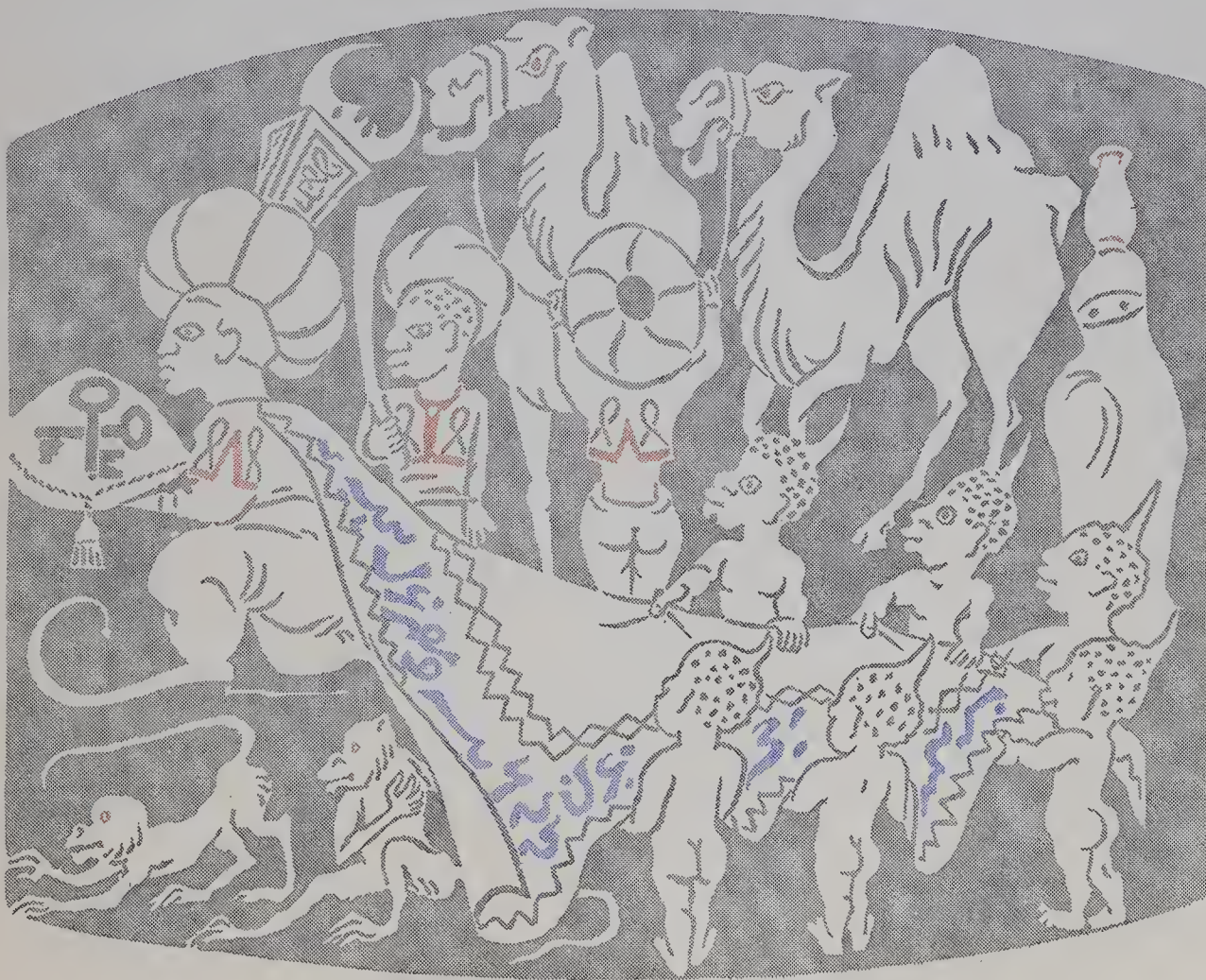
Redevelopment
Everything as in
the First Part
but somehow
spiritualized.

do you say she is our great Queen Isabella? ❖ READER. If we are not reborn again as children, we shall have no part in the Kingdom of Heaven. ❖ CHORIST. The very music is become white, it rings like an icicle upon a crystal corolla. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. How sweet to see you again, my dear friends! Not one of you is missing. You all wanted to come with me—or rather, to precede me to this new place and make it ready for your Queen! But shall I say new, since our royal heart feels so sweetly and wonderingly at home here, so content? Dear friends, when spirit was joined to spirit, there you were and this bright circle of smiling faces was the first sight that met me in the unchanging light. ❖ CHILD ATTENDANTS. Here, as down on the earth, we are the humble servants of Your Majesty, poor little buds who take their beauty from the queenly Rose in their midst. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Thank you, my dear friends! Thank you, little Duchess of Medina Sidonia! And shall I not have the joy of meeting here as of yore in my big garden of Majorca my friend, the great Sultan Miramolin, who brings me the keys of Granada? ❖ DUCHESS. Here comes the Sultan. ❖ SULTAN. I humbly lay these two keys at the feet of Your Majesty. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Are they not the keys of Granada? ❖ SULTAN. They are the keys of a more beautiful Kingdom. ❖

Ceremony as in
Scene 9999
First Part.

All the child
ladies-in-waiting
make a curtsy.

Enter the cortege of
Miramolin and the
Sultan himself—
dressed in white silk,
from turban down to
slippers. He carries
two big keys on a
cushion.





QUEEN

ISABELLA. I well remember that fine summer day when for the first time I felt the arrow of Destiny sink deep into my queenly heart. You had brought me a present.

❖ SULTAN. A white dove in a cage. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. I remember! I tied my ring to the dove and set it free. Where is it now? ❖ SULTAN, *showing an empty cage*. It has not come back. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. I remember! And how shall I

find the way to Heaven without my dove? How shall I open the door of Heaven without my ring? The dove has taken my ring! A ring so small that it is fit for the finger of a child! A ring so large that it can encompass the world! How can I enter Heaven without that Christ-bearing dove? Without my servant Christopher the Dove? Without my friend Christopher who took my ring. Where is my friend Chris-

topher? ❖ MESSENGER, *with a splendid hat of feathers and a cane*. My Lady, we have already sought for Christopher and we did not find him. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Where did you search for him? ❖ MESSENGER. Everywhere. At the King's palace and in the most splendid palaces of Spain. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA.

Look in the vilest den. ❖ MESSENGER. Yes, we have found Christopher Columbus. He is dying on a litter of straw. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Did you tell him that

his Queen calls him? ❖ MESSENGER. He will not come. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Tell him that I call him, that I need him and that I wait for him. ❖ MESSENGER.

He will not come. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Go and tell him that I love him and that he must bring me back my ring. ❖ MESSENGER. He will not come, and he will

not give back your ring. ❖ SECOND MESSENGER. Not only that, but he said something so ugly that I dare not repeat it. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Speak! ❖

SECOND MESSENGER. "Tell Her Majesty," he said, "that I will not come! I have my own path to follow, and I will not give back the ring, for it must not leave my

finger. But I give her everything else which belongs to me, the only thing in the world which never failed me, my mule, my true comrade, who carried me unto the

end!" ❖ MESSENGER. An old mule! ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. What, he still possesses a mule! Take the mule from him! It is not proper that this man should possess

anything but the consideration and the eternal good will of his sovereign. Is that not treasure enough? And enough that reward? Take the mule at once! Bring me this

mule at once!

Messenger turns
away and back.

Messenger turns
away and back.

Another messenger
turns away
and back.

On this poor animal I will make my entry into the Kingdom which Christopher has made ready for me by unfolding from one shore to a farther shore so splendid a carpet. ✚



Enter the mule.
It is all belled,
fringed, accoutered,
and feathered
with silver.



All of them have received tapers and proceed toward the back of the scene.

The scenery is riven through the middle and rolled back like a piece of stuff. It is as if a series of envelopes opened, one after another; as if veil after veil were withdrawn. The blue and starry night appears.

In the blue space is seen in darker blue the oblique shape of both Americas tied to each other by the knot of the Isthmus of Panama.

QUEEN ISABELLA. Let us proceed together. ❖ READER. That carpet which Christopher has unfolded under your feet, what do you call it? ❖ CHORUS. America! Its name is America! ❖ READER. This new world for you was the door of the World Everlasting. ❖ CHORUS. This new world for you, my Queen, was the door of Eternity! The sea, which Christopher placed beneath your feet, was your path to the stars. ❖ READER. And what is its name, this new world beneath your feet? ❖ CHORUS. America! Its name is America!



VIII ALLELUIA. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Toward this new world, who will lead my steps? ❖ READER. Santiago will lead thy steps. ❖ CHORUS. Santiago, toward the New World, will lead thy steps. ❖ READER. The Pilgrim Apostle Santiago moves through the sea to show thee the way. He has uprooted the Columns of Hercules and he carries them on his shoulder. ❖ CHORUS. The world is opened! The doors are opened! Uprooted are the ancient columns of our knowledge! ❖





On the back screen, darker on dark blue, the colossal shape of Santiago appears in pilgrim's dress, with hat, staff, and shells. The stars of Orion's constellation are seen here and there on his body. He carries on his shoulders the Columns of Hercules and holds his staff in his hands. He is sunk higher than the knees in the ocean.



The whole sky is
filled with number-
less gleaming stars as
seen on the astro-
nomical maps.

Black on black
among the teeming
stars is seen the shape
of the Virgin with
the Child.

QUEEN ISABELLA. And pray, what are those
white throbbing things, those numberless clusters of white doves by which the vault
of Heaven is filled? ❖ CHORUS. The doves of Heaven are crowding at the feet of
the Queen of the Angels. ❖ READER. We have arrived. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA.
We have arrived. Let us alight in this sacred land. ❖ She climbs down from the mule.
READER. So many doves . . . ❖
QUEEN ISABELLA. So many doves and only one is lacking. How can I enter
the heavens without my brother Christopher? Let us all kneel down.

Let us all kneel down. ❖

All the tapers are suddenly lighted.
All kneel down.

CHORUS. Open, ye Eternal Doors of Heaven! ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. Virgin Mother of thy Son . . . ❖ CHORUS. Virgin Mother of thy Son. Open, ye Eternal Doors of Heaven! ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. We entreat Thee for thy servant, Christopher. ❖ CHORUS. For thy servant, Christopher. We entreat thee for thy servant, Christopher. Open, ye Eternal Doors of Heaven. ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. That he who crossed first the enormous gulf . . . ❖ CHORUS. He who crossed first the enormous gulf. Open, ye Eternal Doors of Heaven! ❖ QUEEN ISABELLA. He may reach at last what his longing heart sought. ❖ CHORUS. What his longing heart sought, ye Eternal Doors of Heaven! And Father Noah sent the dove and it came back after three days. That he, crossing the enormous chasm, may reach at last what his longing heart sought. Open, ye Eternal Doors of Heaven!

VOX TURTURIS AUDITA EST
ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

VENI COLUMBA AD COLUMBAM
ET MISIT DEUS
COLUMBAM ET REDIIIT POST TRES
DIES AD DOMINUM
DEUM SUUM
AQUAE MULTAE NON
POTUERUNT EXTINGUERE
CARITATEM
VENI COLUMBA MEA SPECIOSA
MEA AMICA MEA
ET REDIIIT POST TRES DIES
VENI CORONABERIS

CHORUS, in deep and triumphal voices.

ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

*Voice of a woman,
very clear and shrill,
behind the scene.*

*Chorus of women's
voices behind the
scene, at the same
time fast and slow
and as if in a
delirious joy.*

*A light is increas-
ing at the nether
part of the back
screen in which is
seen revolving the
upper part of the
earth's globe. A
dove flies away from
it and crosses space.
Everything fades,
leaving only the
dove.*

Why?



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